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Answer given by Ms Vălean
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.6.2020)

The European Maritime Safety Agency provides comprehensive maritime domain information to the EU Member States and selected EU bodies including through Remotely Piloted Aircraft Services for maritime surveillance. The drone operation in question was operated/controlled by the Portuguese company CeiiA, with support of their subcontractor, ELBIT, the Israeli aircraft manufacturer. The start of flight on 8 January 2020 was immediately aborted after take-off, as some internal sensors showed unexpected readings. The consecutive hard landing on the runway was a safety measure. Therefore, the flight did not crash in the usual sense, but performed an immediate emergency landing with some damage to the system. The aviation authorities were informed, the investigation is still ongoing. The final incident report will be submitted to the aviation authorities, as soon as complete.

During the landing, the aircraft diverted from the runway, causing some technical damage to the system (aircraft body, wings and sensor), but with no casualties nor damage on the running way.

The operation with CeiiA in Greece has been stopped. Currently, the European Maritime Safety Agency is not running any other operation for maritime surveillance with this system, nor is any other operation in preparation at this stage. The aircraft is undergoing tests following repairs and the incident evaluation has still to be completed.